

KONSTEN ATT SÄTTA TEXTER I VERKET

Gertrude Stein, Arne Sand

och litteraturens (o)befintliga specificitet

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ABSTRACT

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Konsten att sätta texter i verket. Gertrude Stein, Arne Sand och litteraturens (o)befintliga specificitet. [The Art of Putting Text Into Work. Gertrude Stein, Arne Sand, and the (non-)existent specificity of literature]

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The dissertation has a tripartite subject: Gertrude Stein's novel *A Novel of Thank You* (1926), Arne Sand's *Väderkvarnarna* (1962), and the specificity of literature before an expanded field of general art production. By reading two novels located within the horizon of modernism, the thesis examines how a critical discourse on the historical and aesthetic conditions of literary practice is put forward through formal strategies that challenge the conventions of the modernist novel. These challenges involve the material limits of the artwork, the intersection between different and seemingly discreet mediums, the conventions of the novel, as well as the distinctions between avant-garde, modernism and neo-avant-garde.

Both novels contain a reflection on their historical situatedness that produces an idea, or a promise, of a coming, still unrealized, literature. In the case of Stein, her work demands an extrapolation of the not yet fully realized poetics present in her self-reflective discourse. In the case of Sand, his novel presents itself as a form of resignation before a situation where the modernist tradition and the available literary conventions seem exhausted or used up. The concluding section of the thesis is an analysis of this coming situation that, in various ways, is implied in *A Novel of Thank You* and *Väderkvarnarna* respectively.

This inquiry is carried out by superimposing a theoretical framework, mainly based in visual art and general aesthetics, on what is supposedly a literary subject matter. The method evolves as a consequence of a broader aim of this dissertation: to conduct an investigation into the various ways in which the sublation of a system of separate and mutually exclusive art forms (as a fundamental assumption of formalist modernist aesthetics), into a general, open or "expanded" field of art practice, should or could affect our conception of literature.

Keywords: *Gertrude Stein, Arne Sand, modernism, avant-garde, neo-avant-garde, aesthetics, art theory, formalism, post-medium, minimalism, theory of the novel, materiality, poetics, Maurice Blanchot, Hal Foster, Rosalind Krauss, Jacques Rancière.*